

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

GENERAL REPORT

1. The Executive Cabinet has met three times on 11 November 2010, 9 December 2010 and 17 February 2011 since the last ordinary Council meeting on 2 November 2010. This report summarises briefly the principal items considered and decisions taken at the three meetings. The Cabinet's recommendations on the reports that require Council decisions appear as separate items on the Council agenda.

Meeting held on 11 November 2010

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring Report – Second Quarter of 2010/11

2. The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy reviewing the Authority's performance in respect of the key projects and performance measures included in the Corporate Strategy, together with a number of other national indicators measured locally, during the second quarter of 2010/11.
3. The report revealed a positive performance, with 91% of the key projects either having been completed or on track for completion. The report explained the reasons for the delays in the two projects rated "amber" and the one project rated "red", each of which were expected to be brought back on track during the second quarter period.
4. 93% of the measures identified in the Corporate Strategy were performing either above target or within the 5% tolerance and action plans had been put in place to improve performance in relation to the four specific measures.
5. The report also clarified the circumstances affecting the four performance indicators measured locally, indicating that a full complement of staff within the Development Control Section should assist in the Section's performance in the processing of planning applications.

Chorley Partnership – Performance Monitoring Report for Second Quarter of 2010/11

6. The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented a report on the activities of the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), particularly through the delivery of the objectives of the Lancashire Area Agreement and the 2007 Sustainable Community Strategy, over the second quarter of 2010/11.
7. The Executive Member (Policy and Performance) highlighted the following significant statistics and trends revealed in the report:
 - The overall level of crime had reduced by 6.5% compared to the same period in 2009/10, with reductions in most categories of crime.
 - The target for the establishment of 26 new businesses during the quarter had been exceeded by 7.
 - 7 of the 9 projects commissioned by the Chorley Partnership in 2010/11 were proceeding on or ahead of schedule. The "amber" rated project to develop the Cotswold Community Kitchen was expected to be progressed following the recent appointment of a Co-ordinator. Following delays caused by problems arising with the premises proposed to be used by Help the Homeless for the Chorley Help Hub, further discussions were taking place on ways of progressing the project.

Lancashire Food Waste Collection Scheme

8. Following consideration of a report from the Director of People and Places, the Executive Cabinet approved for implementation a scheme for the collection of food waste separately for composting from households in the Borough.
9. Under the scheme, residents provided with a brown bin for garden waste will be requested to place food waste within the brown bin for collection on a fortnightly basis. Terraced, and other properties without gardens, will be provided with a brown 23 or 25 litre outdoor caddie for food waste, which will be collected on a weekly basis.
10. The scheme, which represents the lowest cost option, will entail an initial one-off capital cost of £30,000, with collection costs having already been factored into the current 10 year contract with Veolia.

Revenue Budget, 2010/11 – Monitoring Report

11. We received a report of the Director of Transformation monitoring the Council's financial performance during the second quarter of 2010/11 in comparison with the budgetary and efficiency savings targets for the financial year.
12. The report revealed that savings of £225,000 had already been achieved in the first half of the financial year and that it was anticipated that additional savings would be made during the year sufficient to meet the expected annual overall saving of £360,000. The projected outturn showed a forecast underspend of around £153,000, which would be added to the Council's working balances.
13. We accepted the report and agreed to use the additional planning fee income received in 2010/11 to finance the one-off software upgrade to the Idox system in use in the Planning and Building Control Sections.

Organisational Restructures:

(a) Revenues and Benefits Shared Services

14. We considered a confidential report of the Director of Transformation and approved for consultation purposes with staff and trade unions the recommended proposals for a phased implementation of a shared Revenues and Benefits service between Chorley and South Ribble Councils, including Benefit Fraud and residual Exchequer functions.
15. The aim of the restructure proposals, compiled in close collaboration with affected staff from both authorities, is to create a leaner, flexible and sustainable shared service that will be responsive to customer needs, whilst generating significant financial savings to both Councils.

(b) Shared Financial Services Restructure

16. The Executive Cabinet approved for consultation purposes with affected staff and trade unions the proposals contained in the Director of Transformation's confidential report on proposals to restructure the Chorley/South Ribble Shared Financial Services, following a review of the efficiency of the current partnership since its inception in early 2009.
17. The review had entailed an assessment of the level of resources required to ensure that the structure of the service was "fit for purpose" and able to address future challenges and customer requirements. The need to focus on core activity and establish structures and procedures that would ensure that the service was delivered in the most efficient and cost

effective manner as possible had been paramount in the compilation of the recommendations.

(c) Restructure of People and Places Directorate; Strategic Housing Section; Policy and Communications Section; and Administrative and Transactional Services

18. We considered a confidential report of the Chief Executive on the responses received from staff and UNISON to the proposals to restructure teams within the People and Places Directorate; Strategic Housing section; Policy and Communications Section; and Administrative and Transactional Services, which we had approved for consultation purposes on 14 October.
19. The report summarised the principal concerns, issues and arguments which had been raised within the representations, and recommended that, following a careful assessment of the responses, no changes be made to the proposed new structures.
20. The Chief Executive's report was circulated at the meeting and, in order to allow all Members to assimilate the contents of the report on the outcome of the consultation exercise, the Executive Cabinet granted delegated authority to the appropriate Executive Members responsible for the respective portfolios to make the ultimate decisions on the restructure proposals, after allowing a short period for other Members to make known their views.

Meeting held on 9 December 2010

Allotments – Action Plan Update

21. The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Director of People and Places on the progress of plans to create three new allotments sites within the Borough from the £40,000 allocated in the 2010/11 revenue budget.
22. The Executive Cabinet had at its meeting on 12 August 2010, authorised public consultation on plans to provide additional allotment plots on potential sites at Rothwell Road, Anderton and Manor Road, Clayton-le-Woods, together with investigations into the feasibility of land at Duke Street, Chorley being converted into allotments.
23. Since then, the imposition of a weight restriction had rendered the Rothwell Road land as unfeasible, resulting in Council owned land at The Common, Adlington being identified as a potentially viable site on which to develop 40 allotment plots. Following the consultation exercise on land at Manor Road, Clayton-le-Woods, work was due to commence on the site once an access rights issue had been resolved.
24. We accepted the report and agreed the commencement of the public consultation process on the plans to provide additional allotment plots on the potential sites at The Common, Adlington and Duke Street, Chorley.

Abbey Village and Brindle Conservation Areas – Appraisal and Management Proposals

25. We received and considered two reports of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy on the principal findings of separate appraisals of the Abbey Village Conservation Area and the Brindle Conservation Area.
26. The comprehensive reviews had resulted in the compilation of an Appraisal and Management Plan for each area which highlights the opportunities and challenges facing each Conservation Area and contains a number of objectives and associated projects/actions to enhance the appearance of both areas.

27. The Executive Cabinet endorsed both Appraisal and Management Proposal Documents in relation to the Abbey Village and Brindle Conservation Areas and approved for adoption the actions contained in the respective Documents as the basis for future improvement and control of development, subject to the availability of funding.

Coppull Leisure Centre

28. The Director of People and Places presented a report informing the Executive Cabinet of Coppull Parish Council's plans to sell the Coppull Leisure Centre and outlining the consequent impact on the operating arrangements.
29. Chorley Council held a lease on the Parish Council owned Centre which was due to expire on 31 March 2011. The Centre was operated by Active Nation, with a management fee being paid by the Borough Council.
30. The Borough Council had recently been notified that Coppull Parish Council had agreed to sell the Leisure Centre to Big Air Limited. The sale was envisaged to be completed on 7 February 2011, at which time the Borough Council's and Active Nation's direct involvement would cease.
31. Chorley Council were required to return the premises in a good condition and, with the endorsement of Liberata, the Cabinet authorised a £50,000 dilapidation payment on completion of the sale, in resolution of any outstanding matters, which would be reimbursed, pro rata, over a 4 year period, should the Centre cease to operate as a leisure facility during this period. We were assured that covenants will ensure that the facility will remain in leisure use.

Core Funding, 2011/12 – Review of Process

32. We considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy proposing changes to the current process for the allocation of Core Funding grants, in order to ensure that the management and monitoring of the grants was effective and provided value for money.
33. The Council receives various applications for different amounts and for a variety of purposes, making it more complex both to allocate the funding and arrange appropriate contractual arrangements.
34. We, therefore, approved changes to the process of allocating Core Funding grants in 2011/12 which will effect:
- a review of the accommodation aspects of Core Funding;
 - the introduction of three new funding schemes (ie Small Core Funding grants up to £2,000; Large Core Funding grants over £2,000, which will be monitored quarterly; Funding of projects commissioned to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy;
 - a review of the application, contractual and monitoring processes for all Core Funding requests to ensure that they are proportional and will ensure better value for money.
35. The changes we have agreed will not impact on the budget provision, but will improve the Core Funding processes to be adopted in the allocation and monitoring of Core Funding grants in 2011/12.

General Budget Principles for 2011/12

36. The Executive Cabinet approved, for consultation purposes, a set of general principles around which the budget framework for 2011/12 would be constructed, in advance of the draft budget being presented to the Council on 1 March 2011.

Performance of Key Partnerships – 2010/11 Mid-Term Progress Report

37. The Executive Cabinet considered a confidential report of the Director of Transformation providing Members with a corporate update on the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements during 2010/11.
38. The report outlined information required by the Council's framework for partnership working, including the performance of the Council's key partnerships against targets set for 2010/11 and an assessment of the partners' financial strengths and stability.
39. We were assured that the partnerships continue to operate and deliver effectively and noted an improved position in respect of Active Nation and Chorley Community Housing. However, each of the partnerships will continue to be monitored stringently to ensure that any action required to address evident concerns can be instigated as early as possible.

Organisational Restructures – Shared Revenues and Benefits Services/Shared Financial Services

40. We considered confidential reports of the Chief Executive on the responses received from staff and UNISON to the proposals (i) for a phased implementation of a shared Revenues and Benefits service between Chorley and South Ribble Councils; and (ii) to restructure Chorley/South Ribble Shared Financial Services, which had each been approved for consultation purposes on 11 November 2010.
41. The report, along with the separate note circulated by UNISON, summarised the principal concerns, issues and arguments contained within the representations received, together with a summary of the Management's comments in response.
42. In order to allow the respective Executive Members the opportunity to assess the feedback from staff and UNISON on each of the two restructure proposals, the Executive Cabinet granted delegated authority to the appropriate Member(s) responsible for the respective portfolios to make the ultimate decisions on the separate restructure plans.

Meeting held on 17 February 2011

Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry Report and Executive's Response - Allotments

43. We received a report of the Director of People and Places outlining a suggested response to the inquiry report which we received as the first agenda item.
44. The report outlined each of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations and contained a suggested response to each recommendation. All of the recommendations have been accepted, at least in part. The recommendations are cost neutral and some of the actions will, in fact, recover expenditure the Council currently incurred.
45. Members discussed the recommendations made in respect of planning permission required for buildings on allotments, the provision of allotments by private land owners and the benefits of varying the size of allotment plots.

Food Waste Collections - Update

46. The Director of People and Places submitted a report advising that the introduction of food waste collections to non-garden properties has been delayed by a minimum of 12 months. Lancashire County Council have now indicated that separate food waste collections are not required until 2012/13.

47. It will still be possible to phase in the introduction of food waste collections to properties who currently receive a fortnightly garden waste collection as proposed in the Executive Cabinet Report of November 2010. The roll out costs of this scheme will be met by existing budgets and no additional vehicles or containers are required.
48. A report will be presented to Executive Cabinet once a date requiring the Council to collect food waste separately from all properties has been provided by LCC.

Section 106 Funding for Youth and Community Activities at Buckshaw

49. The Executive Cabinet approved recommendations within the report of the Director of People and Places relating to Section 106 funding. As part of the Buckshaw Section 106 agreement Chorley Council are due to receive a contribution towards youth and community activities/development in Buckshaw.
50. The developers had recently been invoiced for £64,000. The funding will be used for youth and community activities/development for the whole of Buckshaw Village; the Chorley and South Ribble areas. Youth and community activities were initiatives, activities and/or events that encouraged participation and involvement in community life.

Chorley Council Performance Monitoring Report - Third Quarter of 2010/11

51. We considered a report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy which set out and reviewed the Authority's performance in respect of the key projects and performance measures included in the Corporate Strategy, together with a number of other national indicators measured locally, during the third quarter of 2010/11.
52. Performance of key projects continues to be good, with the majority of the projects either on track, closed or completed. The two projects rated amber (develop a community engagement strategy) or red (carry out energy audit of all remaining council buildings) are expected to be brought back on track over the next quarter.
53. Overall performance for key measures in the Corporate Strategy and key performance indicators is strong, with all of the Corporate Strategy measures performing above target or within the 5% tolerance. Indicators performing better than target includes street and environmental cleanliness – litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting and new businesses established.
54. Three of the key performance indicators relating to processing of planning applications are below target. In these cases, action plans have been developed to outline what action will be taken to improve performance.

Chorley Partnership Performance Monitoring Report - Third Quarter of 2010/11

55. The Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy presented a report of on the activities of the Chorley Local Strategic Partnership (Chorley Partnership) in achieving the targets set in the Sustainable Community Strategy for 2010/2011. Key measures and targets for the new Sustainable Community Strategy are currently being developed and will be reported from April onwards.
56. Overall crime has reduced by 3.8% compared to this period last year and reductions have been seen in most crime categories. The number of new businesses established is performing well with 51 new businesses being established last quarter against a target of 39. Unemployment has remained constant at 2.3% at the end of September to the end of December.

57. Performance is excellent on progress made in the delivery of the key projects commissioned by Chorley Partnership in 2010/2011, with all of the projects currently rated 'green'.

Revenue Budget, 2010/11 - Monitoring Report

58. We considered a report of the Director of Transformation which set out the current financial position of the Council as compared against the budgets and efficiency savings targets it set itself for 2010/11 for the General Fund.
59. The Council has achieved the overall target savings of £360,000 in 2010/11 made up of £300,000 from management of the establishment, £50,000 from the review of administrative and transactional services, and £10,000 from the review of the car leasing scheme. Any further savings made during the remainder of the year as a result of additional vacancies will contribute towards increasing general balances.
60. The projected outturn showed a forecast underspend of around £92,000 against the budget for 2010/11. A number of areas will be monitored closely as the year progresses, including major income streams, in particular car parking fees, planning/building control fees and concessionary travel and benefit costs.
61. An area likely to generate a saving is the Consultants Fees budget in Policy and Performance. The budget for 2010/11 has been set to cover the cost of various corporate reviews, assessments and surveys. A recent partnership working agreement has been set up with ValueAdding.com Ltd. who conduct VFM reviews and this should help to reduce future costs. The Place Survey due to take place in 2010/11 has been cancelled by the Government and it is unlikely that any significant further costs will be incurred before the year-end. This should result in a budget under spend of around £15,000 for 2010/11.
62. Another area where the Council has achieved a saving against budget is in relation to the 2010 elections. As a result of the local elections being combined with the General Election the Council managed to reduce costs and this achieved a saving of around £12,000 this financial year.
63. An area the Council is likely to under achieve against its income budgets is in relation to tolls for the general and flat iron markets. Whilst the covered market continues to attract permanent stall holders, income levels for the flat iron market has suffered as casual stall holders had reduced. This might be partly as a result of the current pressures in the economic climate but is more likely as a direct result of the recent bad weather over the Christmas period. The position will be monitored closely over the remainder of the year.

Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry - Asset Management

64. We received and considered a report on the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that had been set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine asset management.
65. The Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Alan Cullens, thanked the Task Group's Members and Officers for their involvement and commended the findings report's recommendations for adoption by the Executive Cabinet.
66. We agreed that the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group be received and that the Executive's response to the recommendations be determined at a future meeting.

Recommendation

67. That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR PETER GOLDSWORTHY
Executive Leader

There are no background papers to this report.

AU/RR